



## DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

### INFORMATION SERVICE

UNITED STATES FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE

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#### ADDITIONAL FISHERY FUNCTIONS TRANSFERRED TO DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR

Additional commercial fisheries responsibilities of the Federal Government are being taken over by the Department of the Interior by transfer from the Commerce and Agriculture Departments.

This was announced today by Assistant Secretary of the Interior Ross Leffler, following Budget Bureau approval of the transfer of functions in line with provisions in the Fish and Wildlife Act of 1956.

Congress established a separate Bureau of Commerical Fisheries within the United States Fish and Wildlife Service of the Interior Department in the 1956 act and assigned to the Bureau principal Federal responsibility for commercial fishery matters.

Actual transfer of departmental operations will be made gradually as routines are worked out, Assistant Secretary Leffler said.

Two of the new responsibilities of the Bureau of Commercial Fisheries relate to mortgage insurance and loans for construction of fishing vessels, jurisdiction of which resided heretofore in the Maritime Administration. This authority is apart from that already lodged in Interior to administer the fisheries loan program for financing, operating and maintaining fishing vessels.

All the functions of the Department of Agriculture pertaining to fish and shellfish now performed under the Agricultural Marketing Act of 1946 are also transferred to Interior. Among these is the authority for the development and promulgation of voluntary grade standards for fishery products and for the inspection and certification of such products. In the past the standards for fishery products--such as those for fish sticks and breaded shrimp--were developed by Interior's Bureau of Commercial Fisheries but were promulgated by the Department of Agriculture.

The distribution and disposal of surplus fishery products also is transferred to Interior from Agriculture, subject to actual handling of the products through Agriculture's established distribution facilities to avoid duplication of similar facilities in Interior.

Interior also is being given authority, previously held by Agriculture, for conducting transportation studies for the fishing industry. The two Departments will work cooperatively on legal services required in rate structure presentations.

The Interior Department is further developing a series of memoranda of understanding with the Department of Commerce, Agriculture, State, Health, Education, and Welfare, the Federal Trade Commission, and the Corps of Engineers, specifying the responsibilities of the various agencies in areas of joint interests on fishery matters.

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